UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

THE MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION
ADVANCED LEVEL

PHILOSOPHY

May 2009

EXAMINERS’ REPORT

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD
Part 1: Statistical Information

Table 1: Distribution of grades awarded in May 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Abs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>20.12</td>
<td>27.81</td>
<td>10.06</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>23.08</td>
<td>8.88</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 2: Comments regarding performance

Comments regarding Paper 1

Section A: Logic

- Question 1 Proved to be the more popular question in this section. It was also slightly easier than question 2. It is the Examiners’ impression that many candidates spent far too much time on section A, leaving an insufficient amount of time for the rest of the paper. Candidates need to manage their time better.
- In question 1a very few candidates could account for the 16 possible binary logic functions.
- Only a couple of candidates seemed to be familiar with the term ‘Constructive Logic’ (Question 2a)
- Many candidates had difficulty simply stating the duality principle (Question 2e. II )
- Question 2F was beyond the great majority of the candidates.

Section B: Philosophy of Language

Most of the candidates who opted to answer question 3 proved to be well prepared and knowledgeable about the contributions to the philosophy of language by both Davidson and Quine. A good number of them wrote clear and detailed essays. Candidates who answered question 4 could also give a good account of Habermas’s Theory of Communication giving a detailed and well presented account.

Section C: History of Philosophy

With the exception of a few, all candidates answered question 5. It is evident that most of the students prepared themselves well for the exam and that they studied hard. Some showed that they were well trained to write essays and pointed out the differentiated between the philosophy of Heraclitus and Parmendies. Most of them however reproduced the notes they studied and produced answers in point form. The few who attempted question 6 had no idea what Augustine’s Theory of Divine Illumination is about and wrote whatever they could remember of what they studied about St. Augustine.
Comments regarding Paper 2

Section A: Ethics
The majority of students answered question two on the significance of sexuality as communication. Those who answered question one on the contemporary threats to the human embryo, discussed the techniques of reproductive technologies without making any critical reflection on how these techniques are affecting the vulnerability of the human embryo.

Section B: Ancient Texts
Almost all candidates attempted the same question on Plato. The responses showed that most candidates were knowledgeable about Plato’s political philosophy. However, only a few candidates attempted to respond directly to the question posed. A few exceptional candidates showed that they had read widely about the subject and made rather impressive references to the secondary literature.

Section C: Modern and Contemporary Texts
Most candidates answered question 8 on Charles Taylor and understood the basic concepts he uses to counter the problem of relativism. The difficulties some candidates had concerned the failure to understand relativism and to express themselves. For the first time, a number of candidates attempted question 6 on Descartes and again most were well prepared for this question.

Chairperson
Board of Examiners
July 2009